



Ronald McDonald  
House Charities®  
North Australia

# OUR IMPACT 2021





## Acknowledgment of Country

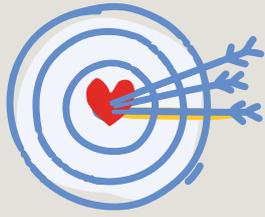
Ronald McDonald House Charities North Australia acknowledges and pays respect to the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work, live and play.

We further acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our practical care programs operate, including the Bindal (Birri Gubba people) Gurumbilbara Wulgurukaba people; the Yirrganydji people, the Larrakia people, the Yuwibara people and the Kalkadoon and Indjilandji people.

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*Our motif was proudly designed in partnership with Townsville Artist Linda Oliver. Linda is a Waanyi woman from her grandmother, and a Kuku-yalangi woman through her grandfather.*

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## Our mission

is to improve the health and well-being of seriously ill children and their families through practical care programs.



## Our vision

is that all seriously ill children can live their healthiest lives.





# A message from our Chair and CEO

## *Achieving new milestones*

2021 was a year of optimism, hope and new milestones for Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) North Australia.

The New Year rang in the beginning of our 'new normal' and was the commencement of RMHC North Australia's 2021-2023 Strategic Plan, setting the path for our continued success and mission delivery.

Foremost, we would like to extend our sincere gratitude to our Board, staff, volunteers and stakeholders whose dedication and significant contributions allowed us to further achieve our mission of improving the health and well-being of seriously ill children and their families through our five practical care programs.

We give thanks to our Mission Partner, McDonald's across North Queensland and the Northern Territory, for their continued support, advocacy and devotion to the Charity throughout the year.

We give adulation to our service partners at the Townsville University Hospital, Mackay Base Hospital and Mt Isa Base Hospital for their exceptional service and support that ensures the delivery of holistic family-centred care, hand in hand with RMHC North Australia.

Family-centred care is an approach to health care based on the belief that optimal health outcomes are achieved when patients' family members play an active role in providing emotional, social and developmental support.

The year was filled with an optimism that saw the return and immense success of many of our fundraising events including our Townsville Charity Gala and Golf Day and new events that broke records. The generosity exhibited by our local community continues

to astound us. Whether it's contributing through regular monthly giving, responding to wish list requests at rapid speed or choosing to give up time to volunteer, we are endlessly thankful to our community for their selfless support for local sick children and their families. Our community volunteers, fundraising committees and corporate volunteers are crucial to our success and the support we provide for our region's families.

The Charity made significant progress on our plans to build the Ronald McDonald Family Room at the Mackay Base Hospital. We were pleased to announce in early 2022 that the tender to build the Ronald McDonald Family Room had been awarded to Fergus Builders, with construction to commence soon after. This would not have been possible without the unwavering support of local families, community groups and businesses in the Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday regions.

RMHC North Australia was honoured to see the renewal of our partnership with long-time supporters, Queensland Country Bank. We truly value the friendships we have forged with Queensland Country Bank and other countless corporate supporters who continue to make such a significant impact.

We are immensely proud that 2021 saw the highest number of enrolments to date in our Ronald McDonald Learning Program, with 116 students participating in the program.

In another major Charity milestone, RMHC North Australia was recognised at the 2021 Queensland Reconciliation Awards, acknowledging our commitment to Cultural Inclusion and our Closing the Gap education initiatives in our Learning Program.

As we look to the future, we feel energised for what we can achieve in the year ahead, knowing we are backed by the vital support of our Board, our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group, our healthcare partners, employees, volunteers and the entire North Australia community.



**Matthew Mason**  
Board Chair,  
RMHC North Australia



**Tamara South**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
RMHC North Australia

## Board Directors

Matthew Mason, Board Chair

Paul Rissman, Deputy Board Chair

Janelle Doyle, Secretary

Aileen Cull, Treasurer

Melanie Blanco, Director

Vicki Carson, Director

Michael Jones, Director

Susan Kinobe, Director

Micheal Luck, Director

Emma Meeking, Director

Trevor Prior, Director

Dr. Andrew White, Director



# RMHC North Australia practical care programs

RMHC North Australia supports seriously ill children and their families throughout their health care journey. We play a unique role in enabling, facilitating and supporting family-centred care.

Family-centred care is an approach to health care that is critically important in providing health care to children, especially those with serious medical conditions. With the family-centred care approach, the paediatric patient's family members are fully involved with health care providers to make informed decisions about the health care and support services the child and family receive.

For families who don't live close to the medical care their child needs, being able to stay close by and involved in their child's treatment makes an immense difference in easing the financial, emotional and physical stress on the entire family.

Our five programs support families across our region by accommodating their needs, relieving some of their stress, and providing the compassionate care they need during what can often be the most difficult time in a family's life.



## Ronald McDonald House

Our Ronald McDonald House is just steps away from Townsville University Hospital and provides essential accommodation and practical support so families can focus on their child's recovery.



## Ronald McDonald Family Room

The Ronald McDonald Family Room, positioned off the children's ward at Townsville University Hospital, provides all the comforts of home within the hospital. This welcoming space provides families respite while being only steps away from their child's bedside. Soon, RMHC North Australia will be opening the second Family Room in our region at the Mackay Base Hospital.



## Ronald McDonald Family Retreat

Having a seriously ill child is hard for the entire family. Our Family Retreat in beautiful Palm Cove provides the perfect opportunity for families to reconnect and make memories in a relaxing location; a welcome change from the hospital environment.



## Ronald McDonald Learning Program

We believe that falling ill shouldn't mean falling behind in school. Our Learning Program pairs children with a qualified teacher, getting them the support they need to catch up on their schooling. We even offer training for teachers and scholarships for high school students to pursue their educational dreams.



## RMHC North Australia Hospitality Cart

Our newest program and proudly the first of its kind in Australia, our Hospitality Cart makes the rounds on the Children's Ward at Mount Isa Base Hospital. Whether it's a snack or something to drink, something to keep entertained or care items like toiletries, we make sure no child or family member is left out.

## Family Story

### – The Willis Family

*The Willis family bravely shared their story in the 2021 Channel 9 documentary, 'Where the Heart Is: The Story of Ronald McDonald House Charities.'*



For some regional Queenslanders, regular access to hospital care is just not possible. RMHC North Australia is there to support families from the Northern Territory and regional Queensland, families like Emma, Dan and Patrick Willis.

Emma and Dan were living on the family's cattle farm, 60km out of Georgetown and a 6-hour drive to the closest major hospital. Soon after they were married, the couple welcomed little Patrick, or 'Patty' as he is affectionately called.

"He was just a perfect, a beautiful, healthy little boy," Emma gushed.

When Patty was five-months-old, he developed a temperature that worsened overnight and was rushed to hospital where he had a seizure and was placed in an induced coma. Patrick had the HSV1 virus, or 'cold sore virus', which can be deadly in children as young as Patrick. The virus is often innocently and unknowingly passed on through loving kisses, and it was attacking Patrick's brain.

Patrick was in hospital for 82 days receiving specialised care, and thanks to RMHC his family were able to be right by his side despite being hundreds of kilometers from home.

"Honestly, it was such a weight off. Your world's falling apart in front of you and [RMHC] have you covered, it's mind-blowing stuff," said Emma.

With ongoing care and treatment, Patrick has started to turn a corner and his family are seeing improvements, with their little boy becoming vocal, smiling and recently starting to roll over.



# 2021

Our commitment to taking care of sick kids and their families drives each and every program at RMHC North Australia.



**5,027**

families supported across all our programs



**7,720**

nights of accommodation provided to families in need



**116**

students enrolled in the Learning Program



**45**

families had a tropical getaway



**22,000+**

visits to our in-hospital Townsville Family Room



**18,925**

hours donated by our selfless volunteers



**201**

children provided with care items and boredom busters from our Hospitality Cart



**739**

children provided with care items and boredom busters from our Family Room on the Go (FROGs) cart



# Ride to the Cape

– Kenfrost Homes lays the foundations to our most successful fundraiser to date

Riders geared up for the inaugural Kenfrost Homes Ride to the Cape Charity bike ride. A week-long event taking 24 mountain bike riders on the adventure of a lifetime, biking around 1,000 kilometres through challenging terrain from Cairns to Cape York, all to raise funds for RMHC North Australia. The determination of this incredible group of riders raised a record-breaking \$256,000 for the Charity, the largest amount raised from a single fundraising event in RMHC North Australia's history, and equal to 1,562 nights of accommodation for families in need.

All money raised ensures that we can continue to deliver our five practical care programs to help sick kids live their healthiest lives.

The enormous success of this event would not have been possible without the tireless work and dedication of numerous volunteers, in particular, Cairns local, Jill Lennox, who contributed a considerable number of hours to help organise the record-breaking fundraiser. As a McDonald's employee, Jill is no stranger to supporting Ronald McDonald House Charities North Australia, and recently received recognition at the Global McDonald's Convention, celebrating her outstanding efforts and significant contributions to the Charity. We are incredibly proud and thankful to Jill for the immense time and effort she has put into supporting RMHC North Australia and the families we support each year.

*"We could not be happier with the result of this year's ride. Bringing home such an incredible record and supporting such a worthy cause makes the weary muscles all the more worth it."* – **Jill Lennox, Event Organiser**



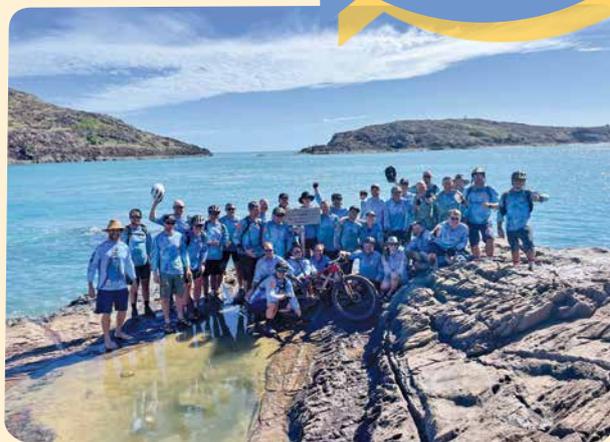
**\$256K**

raised



**24**

riders



**1,562**

nights for seriously ill children and their families

*"Local families turn to us in times of great need and it's with thanks to fundraisers like these that we are well placed to care for families when they need it most."* – **Tamara South, RMHC North Australia Chief Executive Officer**



# The greatest gift of all

## RMHC North Australia Volunteers

If it takes a village to raise a child, then it takes a league of everyday superheroes to support a sick child and their family.

RMHC North Australia Volunteers donated more than 18,000 hours of their time across our five programs in 2021, an outstanding display of their tireless commitment to the Charity and local families in their greatest time of need.

Our volunteers offer unwavering compassion and strength to our families, and ensure that RMHC North Australia continues to provide the most comfortable, clean, safe and welcoming facilities.

We are immensely thankful to our volunteers and the endless generosity and kindness they provide to our families and the Charity.

*'Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart.'*

### From the Volunteers

*"I get satisfaction from tending the gardens and making the place look nice, and also the people you meet here are friendly, nice to chat to. The reward itself is in the giving, and getting the satisfaction of doing something for yourself – and for somebody else"* – **Kenny, Ronald McDonald House Grounds Guardian volunteer**

*"I moved down to Townsville from Atherton and didn't know anybody at all, and somebody suggested I volunteer here at the Ronald McDonald Family Room. It's great because you get to meet the families and children that are in the hospital and you can provide a bit of support and show them the facilities we've got – which are brilliant – and you get to know them after a little while. We cook the odd cake and try to make them as comfortable as possible and it just gives you a nice feeling that you're useful."* – **Margaret, Ronald McDonald Family Room volunteer**

*"Volunteering at Ronald McDonald House and Family Room gives me a lot of satisfaction. I have met so many amazing people who use the facilities, and hope what I am doing makes a little bit of difference in their daily lives."* – **Sandra, Ronald McDonald House Learning Legends volunteer**

### From the Families

*"My favourite things at the House were the volunteers. They are just amazing. No matter what they were doing they did it with a smile and made us feel like home."* – **Nicole, Ronald McDonald House family guest**

*"Our stay was amazing and the volunteers were absolutely beautiful with their ongoing support, they made our big girl Stellar's birthday a special day."* – **Melissa, Ronald McDonald House family guest**



# Getting better shouldn't mean falling behind

*Ronald McDonald Learning Program*

## ***Every child deserves to reach their educational potential***

When a child has been absent from school for a significant length of time due to illness or injury, going back to school can be a daunting prospect. The Ronald McDonald Learning Program partners children with a qualified teacher to provide up to 40 hours of one-on-one, personalised tutoring.



## **Charlie Bell Scholarship**

*Making dreams come true*

The late Charlie Bell was the first Australian Global CEO of McDonald's. Following his passing after a long and courageous battle with cancer, Charlie left a wonderful legacy that allows young people who have experienced serious illness or injury to get their education back on track and follow their dreams. RMHC is privileged to offer Scholarships in honour of Charlie Bell.

This scholarship provides grants of \$5,000 to students between the ages of 15 – 20 years old to assist them with their tertiary education.

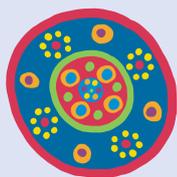
## **Erin's Story**

Erin is one of our outstanding recipients of the 2021 Charlie Bell Scholarship. In 2006, Erin was diagnosed with Rhabdomyosarcoma (cancer of soft tissue – mainly muscles). When she was just seven years old and starting Year 2, Erin missed around two years of her schooling.

Even through the struggles of dealing with cancer and the after effects of chemotherapy, Erin maintained a 99% attendance rate upon her return to full-time schooling.

Erin's goal since graduating from high school was to secure a placement in a Nursing degree at JCU in Cairns and practice nursing in remote communities. Eventually, she would like to specialise in children's oncology.

We are proud to announce that Erin has been offered a conditional placement for Nursing at JCU Cairns for 2023.



## Celebrating diversity

### Reconciliation Action Plan

Operating in a culturally sensitive way is paramount to RMHC North Australia. With 29% of our House guests identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, Indigenous inclusion is critical. We were proud and humbled to have our reconciliation efforts recognised at the 2021 Queensland Reconciliation Awards, where Ronald McDonald House Charities North Australia won the inaugural Health and Wellbeing category. This award acknowledged our commitment to Cultural Inclusion and our Closing the Gap education initiatives exhibited through our Learning Program.

#### Relationships

- Continued to work in close partnership with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group to identify ways to evolve existing cultural inclusion practices
- Positively influenced stakeholders to drive their own reconciliation outcomes by sharing our journey
- Successfully established new relationships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and community groups

#### Respect

- Acknowledgement and reflection on cultural days and weeks of significance throughout the year
- Continued delivery of Cultural Awareness Training hosted by our First Nations Board Director and member of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group, Trevor Prior
- Invited local Traditional Owner to provide Welcome to Country at significant events

#### Opportunities

- Identified communication channels to support expressions of interest for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory group members

#### Governance

- Participated in the Reconciliation Action Plan Impact Measurement Survey
- Continued regular meetings with Reconciliation Working Group

#### What's next

- Continue development of our 2022-2024 Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan
- Grow our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group

*"More than a word, it takes action. And what I like about that is this Charity actually has been taking action. And they've been recognised for it. Winning this award motivates all of us to continue along this path of reconciliation.*  
- Trevor Prior, RMHC North Australia Board Director and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group Member



# Bringing comfort to Mackay families

## *Mackay Ronald McDonald Family Room*



In 2021, we were proud to make significant progress on our plans to build the Ronald McDonald Family Room, in partnership with Mackay Hospital and Health Service and Mackay Hospital Foundation.

The Ronald McDonald Family Room is on track to commence construction in 2022. This would not be possible without the overwhelming support of the Mackay, Whitsunday and Isaac communities, who contributed over \$500,000 in 2021 towards the Capital Campaign. This is a testament to the local community's commitment to RMHC North Australia and supporting seriously ill children and their families.

With the tender to build the Ronald McDonald Family Room in Mackay being awarded to local Mackay based construction company, Fergus Builders, we are yet another step closer to seeing the Family Room come to life.

The purpose-built facility will support an additional 2,500 children receiving medical treatment at Mackay Base Hospital and their families annually. With 374 families in Mackay

relying on the Townsville Family Room in 2021 alone, we know an additional Family Room in Mackay will make a real, positive difference to families with sick kids in the region.

Much like our Ronald McDonald Family Room at Townsville University Hospital, our Family Room in Mackay will provide local families respite while visiting their sick child in the hospital. They can pop in for a coffee with one of our volunteers, have a shower, throw on a load of washing or even take a nap, all whilst being steps away from their precious child.

The support shown from the local community in bringing this facility to life has been pivotal in us reaching this point. Thank you to the numerous community organisations, individuals, and our incredible corporate sponsors who have come on board by formally committing their support to the region's sick kids.

Our heartfelt thanks also to the McDonald's Mackay licensees for their unwavering support.



Organisation	Sponsor level
Flagon & Dragon	Major Partner
Mackay Hospital Foundation	Visionary Sponsor
Glencore	Love Sponsor
MM Electrical	Love Sponsor
Aurizon	Courage Sponsor
Coalroc	Courage Sponsor
D&T Hydraulics & Engineering	Courage Sponsor
Global Product Search	Courage Sponsor
Key Solutions	Courage Sponsor
McDonalds Mackay	Courage Sponsor
BHP Coal	Hope Sponsor
CQ Field Mining Services	Hope Sponsor
Daily Mercury	Hope Sponsor
DavKat Heavy Haulage	Hope Sponsor
DGH Engineering	Hope Sponsor
Global Civil and Mining Holdings	Hope Sponsor
Harrup Park	Hope Sponsor
Hastings Deering	Hope Sponsor
Mackay Sugar	Hope Sponsor
Mackellar	Hope Sponsor
Macrossan & Amiet Charitable Foundation	Hope Sponsor
NQ Bulk Ports	Hope Sponsor
Sacca Heavy Repairs	Hope Sponsor
S&S Heavy Haulage	Hope Sponsor
Wilmar Sugar	Hope Sponsor



## \$37 a day

in food and beverage purchases is saved by families who use the Ronald McDonald Family Room program



## 89%

of families felt their well-being was better after visiting a Ronald McDonald Family Room

### Considerable Community Contributions:

- DHG Engineering
- Mackay Basketball
- Mackay Combined Motor Show
- Mackay Mayors Charity Golf Day
- McDonald's Restaurants Raffles
- M&P Services Charity Golf Day





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Keeping families close™

[www.rmhc.org.au/na](http://www.rmhc.org.au/na)